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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000204

SIPDIS

CPA FOR TRENT, WILLIS, WAYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/8/2009

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: RESUMPTION OF ROYAL JORDANIAN BAGHDAD FLIGHTS

REF: AMMAN 8299

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. GNEHM. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) National Security Adviser and General Intelligence Department Director Sa'ad Khair told the Ambassador January 8 that he had authorized the resumption of Royal Jordanian (RJ) charter service to Iraq. Khair said that the government had concluded that with the passage of time the specific security concerns that led the flights' suspension in November (ref) had abated to the extent that RJ could be allowed to proceed. Nonetheless, the GOJ understands that a general risk to aviation in Iraq persists. Khair said that in addition to Baghdad International, he had authorized flights to Irbil and al-Balad airports.

¶2. (SBU) Royal Jordanian confirmed to us separately that they will begin flights next week, beginning Friday, January 9 with two flights to BIAP chartered by KBR. Regular charter flights to BIAP would resume on Sunday, January 11 and continue at a frequency of four days per week (Sunday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday) with 46-passenger DASH-8 aircraft. During the week of January 12, the airline will make a decision on whether to begin flying to Irbil and al-Balad. That decision would be partially based on whether or not the airline was able to lease a 168-seat 737-400 "from Europe."

¶3. (C) In making this decision RJ was likely not aware of reports that a U.S. military C-5 had been hit by a missile near BIAP on January 8. We will remain engaged with RJ and report any change in their decision.

GNEHM